

Texas Higher Education
COORDINATING BOARD
College Readiness and Success

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Donna Bahorich, Chair
Texas State Board of Education
P.O. Box 79842
Houston, Texas 77279

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Dear Chair Bahorich:

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) appreciates the opportunity to provide remarks on college readiness and recommendations on the proposed English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) to the State Board of Education (SBOE). Our remarks focused on the effectiveness of the ELAR TEKS as a curriculum for readiness to succeed in entry-level college credit courses. We appreciate the time and thoughtful effort your review committee put into drafting the proposed ELAR TEKS.

As you may know, the THECB contracted with the Texas A&M University Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) to facilitate a panel of 13 public and higher education content experts to complete a Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS)-ELAR TEKS alignment analysis. The panel was charged with:

- Studying the degree of alignment of the ELAR TEKS to the Texas CCRS;
- Rating the strength of alignment of the ELAR TEKS to the Texas CCRS; and
- Making recommendations to improve the degree of alignment of the ELAR TEKS to the Texas CCRS.

Overall, the THECB was pleased with the thoroughness with which the panel reviewed the proposed TEKS and the Texas CCRS. The Coordinating Board strongly believes establishing a clear connection between the TEKS and the Texas CCRS is a crucial component of system alignment that will result in more students being ready for college. Therefore we have offered the following recommendations from our panel review:

1. in the student expectations, ensure progressive increases to higher orders of thinking through all grade levels;
2. improve alignment to the Texas CCRS;
3. include relevant TEKS in the other content areas in order to ensure the teaching of critical reading and analytic writing skills across the curriculum, notably in science, history, and social studies;
4. simplify and clarify the language being used in the TEKS, to avoid ambiguity; and
5. develop in students an integrated sense of reading, writing, speaking, and listening by integrating the rich content of the knowledge and skills statements into the student expectations in the TEKS.



These recommendations will help ensure that students graduate with the ELAR knowledge and skills necessary for postsecondary success. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed ELAR TEKS and commend the SBOE for all their efforts.

Thank you for your commitment to the students of Texas and for your continued support to improve the educational pipeline in our state. I look forward to our continued collaboration.

Respectfully,

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R. Jerel Booker, JD.
Assistant Commissioner
for College Readiness and Success

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Kramer".

Kristen Kramer, Ph.D.
Deputy Assistant Commissioner
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